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Fighting for Rank and File Power!

Teamsters for a Democratic Union

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ABOVE: Local 299 members show their support for TDU members Pete Camarata and Al Ferdnance when the local officials tried to expel Pete and Al. Pete later said, "In the TDU we protect ourselves by backing each other up. Without the support from these guys, I'd probably be walking the streets today."

REAR COVER: These Local 299 members are demonstrating their support for TDU at the November nominations meeting.

A Time for Decision

You're a Teamster, ask yourself a few questions:

Will your wages, the real spending power of your wages, go up in the next contract?

Will your working conditions be protected—and improved—by your union negotiating team and your grievance procedure?

Will the life style and living conditions that you've worked so hard to get for yourself and your family be protected?

Is your job itself secure? And will you get a pension when you retire?

Will your voice be heard in the union? Is your union democratic? Do you really get representation?

A few years from now, will there even be a union in your barn or shop?

If you're a Teamster and you answered "No" to even one of these questions, then it's time you made a decision. You should decide to join and get active in Teamsters for a Democratic Union [TDU].

While some members remain apathetic and uninvolved, thousands of others have made a decision. They've decided to join the fight to turn this union around. To give it back to the membership. To make it stand up to the employers. To fight to protect wages, benefits, and conditions. To turn our union into a fighting outfit once again.

TDU TODAY

Here's what Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) is doing today:

- Organizing for decent contracts for freight workers, UPS employees, grocery workers and carhaulers and others in 1979.
- Fighting to get the membership the right to vote on all officers from steward to International General President.
- Teaching the membership how to fight and win grievances.
- Working to reform local unions by passing democratic by-laws.
- Running reform candidates for office in Local union elections.
- Providing legal help to rank and file members through a network of TDU lawyers.

WHO WE ARE

TDU is a group of rank and file working union members. Men and women just like yourself—truck drivers, dock workers, clerks, production workers—every kind of Teamster member.

TDU is the Teamster membership—the concerned members, the active members, the responsible members.

We were born fighting. In late 1975 a group of us met to discuss the coming 1976 Freight contract. We expected a sell-out. We organized to prevent one.

We formed a group called Teamsters for a Decent Contract. Through literature, petitions, demonstrations and picket-lines at union halls and employer headquarters—right up to a

These Teamsters came from all over the country to demonstrate for a decent contract in front of the 'Marble Palace'-Teamsters International Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Jan. 76. The sleeping giant, the Teamster Rank and File, began to wake up. We'll never go to sleep again.

demonstration in front of the "marble palace" itself, the Teamsters International headquarters in Washington—we organized. We put pressure on the union officials and on the employers.

Because of our efforts, for the first time in history the International called a nationwide freight strike. And the union was forced to raise its demands on the employers.

Union officials knuckled under to the employers and called off the strike almost before it began. But Detroit freight drivers and dockmen stayed out on a wildcat fighting for the demands that TDC had made popular. We didn't win much in 1976, but everything we got was due to TDC.

FROM TDC TO TDU

The Teamster Convention took place in Las Vegas just a few months later in the summer of '76. One of the TDC leaders, Pete Camarata from Detroit Local 299, was there. He stood up to Fitzsimmons, demanding that his salary be cut and voting against his re-election, the only delegate to do so.

Fitzsimmons told Camarata, TDC and the union membership to "Go to hell."

But we didn't. We went to Kent, Ohio and held our own convention, a rank and file convention. Over 250 rank and file Teamsters attended and laid the foundation of Teamster reform, an on-going organization to bring the union back to the members.

The Teamsters who'd built TDC were there, the men and women who'd been through the national freight strike and the Detroit wildcat. But they weren't the only ones. There were UPS workers who'd been through their own official strikes and a series of wildcats. There were carhaulers who'd walked off the job when the union tried to jam a contract down their throat. There were Teamsters from all sorts of jurisdictions and crafts like beverage, airlines, canning and manufacturing.

A RANK AND FILE PLATFORM

At that convention we adopted a rank and file platform for union reform.

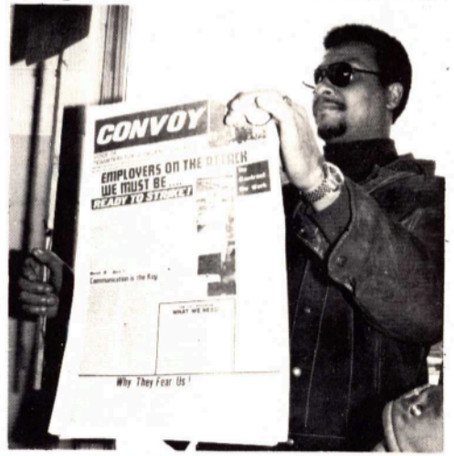
Our first concern was democracy and representation: the right to elect all union officials; salaries for union officials the same as for working members; democratic union by-laws.

Second, we wanted to defend our wages and conditions: we need a fighting grievance procedure; rank and file control of negotiating and bargaining; stop production standards in warehouses and on the dock, an end to unfair dispatch procedures for road drivers; voluntary overtime, no so-called "flexible work week"; protection of full-time jobs, an end to management's use of part-timers and casuals to destroy union conditions.

And we also made the fight against discrimination part of our platform: no discrimination against women, Blacks, or Latin workers; raise all wages, benefits and conditions to the best in the union. No more sweethearts and no more substandard shops.

But we knew it would take more than good ideas. It would take organization to bring it all about. So during our first year:

- We organized a legal network to get top quality legal assistance for the Teamster rank and file.
- We put together an education group to keep the rank and file informed.
- We turned our publication **CONVOY** into a real newspaper with informative and educational articles on the industry, employers, union officials, pension fund, contracts, and strikes.
- We organized chapters from coast to coast and border to border, from the biggest cities to smaller towns—from Miami to Vancouver, Canada and from California to New Jersey.
- We got involved in every major fight in every local on the side of the rank and file.
- We organized campaigns for democratic by-laws in Flint, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, West Virginia, Oakland and Los Angeles.

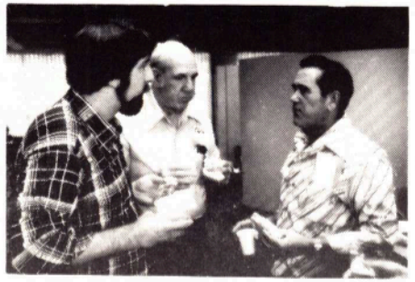


It was **CONVOY**, the voice of the Teamster rank and file, that carried the word about TDC to thousands upon thousands of Teamsters. Today it continues to organize for TDU.

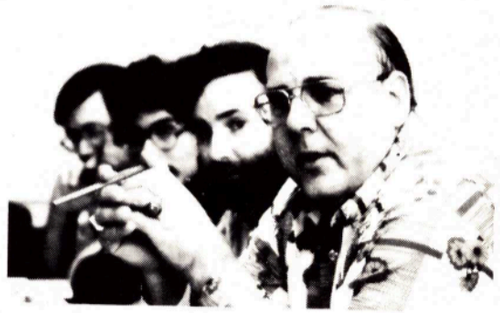
FIRST BIRTHDAY

In September, 1977 we celebrated our first birthday. Our rank and file movement has

1977 TDU Convention



Clockwise from upper right: Al Ferdnance (right) thanks Harry Patrick, former Secretary-Treasurer of the United Mine Workers for his address to the Convention; Jack Vlahovic, TDU member and elected Sec.-Treas. of Local 213 in British Columbia, Canada; carhaulers discuss the industry in their workshop; Sharon Cotrell, Long Beach, Ca. Local 692, responds to a speaker's quip; Rege Miller (left), Pittsburgh Local 249, exchanges views over coffee with Bob Ellerman (right) of Local 235, Pomona, Ca



Clockwise from upper right: Jim Davidson (center), Oakland, Ca. Local 85, listens attentively to a featured speaker; Kevin Lowe of Oakland Local 302 speaking from the floor; Howard Crenshaw, Local 610 from Granite City, Ill., makes a point at the grocery workshop; Bill "Gus" Gustafson (foreground), road steward at Werner-Continental in Pittsburgh, at the road drivers' workshop; a few of the 350 TDU members at the Convention; Carole Paff, TDU office staff, at the wives' workshop.

grown up quick. Our first convention had laid the foundation with its platform for reform. Our second convention expanded on that to carry out organizing campaigns throughout the country.

The second annual rank and file Teamster convention was a terrific success. In exciting workshop discussions, members learned about the structure and organization of the union. About grievance procedure and how to win. Heard talks on legal rights. Exchanged information about local newsletters and rank and file papers. There were workshops on shop floor organizing, discussions on involving Teamster wives and women Teamsters in the movement. And we discussed how to stop discrimination against Black and Latin Teamsters. The Convention passed a resolution in support of the Equal Rights Amendment.

We set tasks for our young organization that older, stronger groups would hardly have the courage to take on. We decided to expand to dozens of other cities, to recruit more members, to develop established chapters.

We launched our current campaigns to begin organizing road drivers and other freight workers, carhaulers, grocery workers, and UPS employees in preparation for the 1979 contracts. We organized a campaign in the Central States to get rid of the pension trustees and get rank and file elected trustees to protect our retirement. And we launched a campaign to get the membership the right to vote on all International officers.

Following the second Convention, our members hit the streets in election campaigns in several cities. In Detroit, Pete Camarata challenged for Vice President of Local 299, the office held by Richard Fitzsimmons, son of the International President. (As we go to press, the results are not yet in.) Bob Janadia, a TDU candidate for President of Local 337 in Detroit, got 43% of the vote, coming close to unseating International Vice-President Bobby Holmes. Other TDU candidates made good showings in Los Angeles Locals 357 and 208.

A NEW ERA OF TEAMSTER REFORM

Now you know what TDU is and where it came from. Don't you think it's about time you got involved—after all, it's your union.

Today, more than ever before, our union needs a change. And today, more than ever before, it's possible.

The International officials are in a crisis. Government investigations by Labor and Justice Department officials have forced Fitzsimmons out of the Pension Fund and may soon force him out of the General President post. A fight is already opening up between other members of the International Executive Board. The question seems to be which crook will run the show.

Now, more than ever before, the rank and file needs a voice and an organization.

The trucking employers are getting ready to go for blood in 1979—out blood. A new hard-nosed employer organization has been formed to fight for a cheap contract in 1979. The fight has already begun in many locals. Buy-outs and bankruptcies threaten job security. Non-union brokers are taking away union jobs. Scab outfits operate in nearly every town. big southern non-union trucking companies are spreading north, threatening wages and working conditions. And deregulation is threatening to bring cut-throat competition and more collapsing companies. Meanwhile, management pushes for productivity.

Now, more than ever before, the rank and file needs a voice and an organization.

You know what it's like out there on the streets, and back there in the barn, or on the shop floor. Do you feel your future is secure? Don't you think it's about time you did your part to protect your family and yourself.

Then you should get involved in TDU. Join us in our campaign to reform the union and stand up to management.

Let's get decent contracts in 1979. Let's get rid of do-nothing officials. Let's get this pension business cleaned up.

Let's get going and let's do it together.

It's your union. It's your future. It's up to you.

"... the pride and dignity that I remember ..."

As a boy of 14 I worked on the docks at the foot of Wabash Ave. in Detroit. I remember the pride and dignity, almost to the point of arrogance, that the men of the Teamsters Union had. It made me look forward to the day when I could be a Teamster. At 15, I quit school and worked in the garage until I was 19. I then drove a 3,000 gallon oil truck and belonged to the OCAW until I was drafted. In 1954 at age 23 and just out of the Army, I finally became a Teamster and within one year a committee man in Local 247. I am now in my 24th year of cement hauling and have been a committee man for all but two years of that time.

I have watched the Teamsters erode from an organization of pride and fellowship to a den of thieves. I have seen men sent to prison for accepting bribes and after being released from prison put back into similar union positions. The democracy that we once had has turned into a dictatorship. Our funds for retirement have been stolen to the tune of millions of dollars. We Teamsters are not at all sure of our retirement after years of our money going into it. Our right to reject or accept a contract or even negotiate one has been taken away from us. The men have all but stopped writing grievances because our board is made up of 3 apathetic lifetime union men, 3 company men, and one lawyer who is supposed to be impartial but in fact is a lawyer for the Michigan Trucking Association. Hence, no bargaining power, no grievances, no representation.

The pride I once had is gone. I used to go out of my way to say I was a Teamster. Now I go out of the way not to admit it. Shame on the Union officials and BA's who have done this to us. Like a drowning man, the only salvation I see is the TDU. The by-laws that permitted this to happen must be changed. I don't need any more aggrevation in my life so I have joined TDU to fight rather than crawl under a rock like a whipped dog and die.

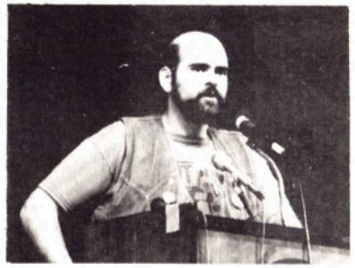
I still have that small amount of pride in me and would once again like to walk with the pride and dignity that I remember many years ago. With God's help we shall once again be proud Teamsters through TDU.

Roy Brindamour
Local 247

(reprinted from **Rank and File Speaks**, newspaper of Detroit Metro TDU)

TDU National Steering Committee 1977-78

Doug Allan, Local 208 in Los Angeles, is currently fighting for his and 52 other jobs against the closing of the Acme/Alltrans LA terminal.



Pete Camarata, Detroit Local 299, has been a Teamster for 9 years. Pete was the only delegate to oppose Fitzsimmons at the 1976 Las Vegas Convention. He is the TDU candidate for Vice-President of Local 299.

Ken Paff, Cleveland Local 407, was a founding member of Teamsters for a Decent Contract in 1975. This is Ken's second year as TDU National Secretary.

Dan Kablack, a Teamster for 8 yrs., is a production worker at Pepsi in Pittsburgh, Pa., Local 250. Dan and other TDU members achieved breakthroughs in safety and health and affirmative action and played an important role on the negotiating committee.

Dave Perry, a driver for Safeway Foods and member of Local 302 in Oakland, has been a Teamster for 24 yrs. Last summer Dave and his co-workers were involved in an eight week strike against Safeway's job cutting drive.

Eileen Janadia, a member of the Detroit Metro TDU steering committee, is also an editor of the chapter's paper, **Rank and File Speaks.** Her husband, Bob, ran a close race against International VP Bobby Holmes for the presidency of Local 337.

Charlie Brown, a driver for McLean in Washington, Pa., has been a steward for six years and was a TDU candidate for Secretary-Treasurer of Local 585.

Phyllis Carpenter, is editor of **SCOOP,** a Schneider Drivers' newsletter, which improved their organization and communication

Keith Gallagher, a dockworker at Roadway's breakbulk in Tannersville, Pa., is in Local 229. He and his wife Pam helped organize Roadway workers' wives to picket the terminal and the union hall to protest conditions.

Howard Tucker, Local 332 in Flint, Mi., was a car hauler for 10 years until he was fired in the 1976 car hauler strike against the union sellout. Howard also led TDU's bylaws reform effort in his local with much success.

Bilal Chaka, Local 692, works for Yellow Freight at their Long Beach, Ca. terminal. Bilal is a driver steward at that terminal, is co-chairperson of LA TDU, and was a TDU candidate for trustee in #692 in 1976.

Dan Charleston (on right), is a road driver for Signal out of Local 710 and a Teamster for over 20 yrs. Dan is president of the Concerned Drivers Council, a group composed mostly of Signal drivers.

Jim Davidson, a driver for Lawson Drayage in San Francisco, heads up the Nor-Cal TDU chapter. Jim is a member of Local 85 and has been in the Teamsters for 9 years.

Jim Blomfield is an elected trustee in Local 213 in British Columbia, Canada. Jim is involved in a major battle between the rank and file and Canadian Director Ed Lawson.

Mel Packer, a member of Local 249 in Pittsburgh, Pa. and a driver-dockman for Consolidated Freightways, has been a Teamster for 8 years. Mel has done extensive traveling to organize for the TDU.

Rank and File Bill of Rights

I. DEMOCRATIC BY-LAWS. All Business Agents and Stewards should be elected. Vacancies in offices should be filled by special election within 3 months. Local union committees should be elected. Contract and strike votes should be by majority (not ⅔). All contracts should provide for elected officers retaining their company seniority.

II. DIRECT ELECTION OF OFFICERS. General President and all International officers should be elected by the membership. International VPs elected by regions. An end to Trusteeships and split-off locals.

III. A FAIR GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE. Innocent til proven guilty, right to remain on the job til final procedure completed. Grievance procedure should include right to a speedy trial arbitration by peers, and the right to strike if necessary.

IV. PRESERVATION OF WORKING CONDITIONS. The union's purpose is to expand and preserve what we have, not trade it away for anything less. People come first, not productivity.

V. SAFETY AND HEALTH. We have the right to enter the workplace without fear for our health and leave in the same condition we arrive. Teamsters should have the right backed up by our union to refuse unsafe work or hazardous conditions. We are not machinery.

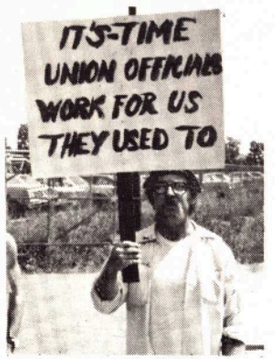
VI. EIGHT HOUR DAY AND FIVE DAY WEEK. Forced overtime and unfair dispatch rules destroy our family life and cost us jobs. No mandatory overtime, "flexible" work weeks, or 70-hour slavery. We are for the advent of the four day week. We work to live, not live to work!

VII. A DECENT PENSION. Every dollar in the Pension funds belongs to us. We are entitled to 25 and out, cost of living on pensions, and union pension trustees elected by the rank and file and retirees to safeguard our money.

VIII. JUST SALARIES FOR OFFICERS. A union officer can't understand the problems of members who make less than half what he makes. No officer should make more than the highest paid working members in his jurisdiction. No multiple salaries from union, company or government sources, or special fringes and pensions. Salary increase limited to average increase for membership and subject to membership approval.

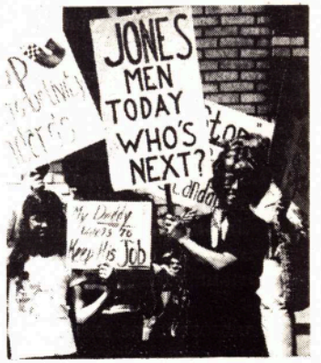
IX. EQUALITY AMONG TEAMSTERS. Bring all wage levels up to the highest standards, not a lot for the few and little for the many. Fight the hardest for the lowest paid.

X. END TO DISCRIMINATION. Employers have used difference in age, race and sex to divide us for decades. We oppose these injustices and divisions. Support affirmative action to correct past injustices. Employers should bear the cost of their past discrimination, not the members.

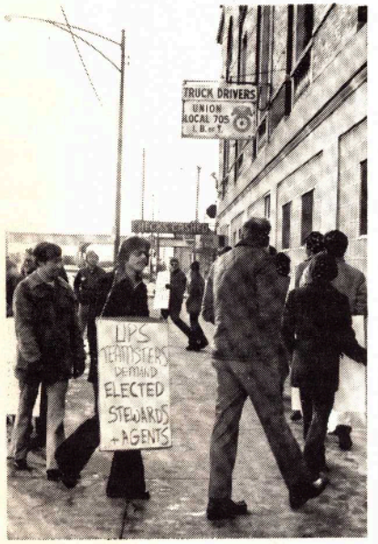


One of the many car-haulers who wildcatted in 1976. Despite the rejection of a contract offer by a majority of the car-haulers, their officials declared it ratified.

Bob Janadia, TDU candidate for president of Local 337 in Detroit, expresses the members' opinion of the state of the pension funds in front of Joint Council 43.



Pittsburgh TDU wives and children turn out to support Jones workers at a grievance meeting about new company productivity standards.



AT LEFT: Chicago UPS workers demonstrating in front of their local for the right to vote on business agents and stewards. They also insisted on union meeting times that would allow most members to attend.

AT RIGHT: TDU members have been active in proposing local by-laws changes aimed at bringing more democracy into the union.

TDU Constitution

ARTICLE ONE: NAME

This organization shall be known as **Teamsters for a Democratic Union [TDU]**. Whenever this organization shall use the word "Teamsters", whether in this constitution or any other TDU document, it shall be understood that this also applies to members of the Chicago Truck Drivers Union (CTDU).

ARTICLE TWO: OBJECT

The object of this organization is to build a national, unified movement of rank and file Teamsters that is organized to fight for rank and file rights on the job and in the Union. We aim to bring the Teamsters Union back to the membership. We do not advocate secession from the Teamsters Union, or "dual unionism" in any form whatsoever.

This organization shall seek to unite with all bona fide rank and file Teamster groups. With that purpose in mind, TDU will strive to develop common areas of work, a unified strategy, and a coordinated leadership with any other such groups. Where such other groups have a proven strength and individual identity, they shall not be required to give up that identity. Rather, we would seek agreement on strategy and program and a leadership that would strengthen the rank and file movement.

ARTICLE THREE: NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

This national movement shall be based on individual members and on local chapters of Teamsters organized under the same name. The highest policy making body of the movement shall be the annual convention. The national movement shall elect a National Steering Committee (NSC) as the body to govern it between conventions of the TDU.

ARTICLE FOUR: LOCAL ORGANIZATION

This organization shall build and be built upon local chapters in cities or individual union jurisdictions with elected steering committees to lead those chapters.

ARTICLE FIVE: NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be required of the NSC that they provide leadership for the organization between conventions. The NSC shall have the power to choose administrative people to help run the organization should finances permit. The NSC is entrusted with the power to make certain that the will of the organization, as decided at the annual convention, is carried out.

The National Convention shall elect the National Steering Committee and three (3) numbered alternates, with the alternates being used to fill any possible permanent vacancies that may occur in the National Steering Committee. The size of the NSC shall be set by the convention.

It shall also be a particular responsibility of the NSC to:

- put out a national paper.
- manage national finances.
- keep communications going within the group and between chapters.

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: Over 250 Teamsters from around the country met in Kent, Ohio in September, 1976 to formally establish the TDU. It was at this convention that the TDU Constitution was hammered out by those in attendance. This is one example of how the TDU puts its beliefs about democracy in the union into action.

- support local chapters in their activities and help build and coordinate regional activities.
- coordinate national campaigns as needed.
- plan the national conventions.
- raise funds for the defense of individuals and Local Unions who are interfered with by the International or Local officials through illegal trusteeship, denial of pensions, improper handling of grievances, etc.
- establish a Defense Committee to provide, but not be limited to, legal and financial support for individuals and local TDU-affiliates as needed.
- raise funds.
- support local election campaigns of TDU-affiliated groups.

The NSC needs to be absolutely representative of the organization, but also of a size and from a close enough geographical area to actually meet. By virtue of their election, all NSC members are expected to attend all the NSC meetings in the absence of a good excuse, such as family emergency or work.

Finally, it shall be the responsibility of the NSC to elect a person from its own ranks who will be known as the National Secretary (NS).

ARTICLE SIX: NATIONAL SECRETARY RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be required of the National Secretary (NS) that he or she coordinate the day-to-day functioning of the national TDU. The NS shall **not** be empowered with decision making power as regards national policies and/or programs. The NS shall be immediately responsible at all times to the direction of the NSC. The National Secretary shall preside over all NSC meetings and the annual convention and shall appoint a parliamentarian and recording secretary for meetings of these bodies.

ARTICLE SEVEN: CHAPTER RESPONSIBILITES

Local chapters shall be active in local issues, grievances, contracts and try to publish local newsletters or newspapers as organs of TDU. Local chapters shall be responsible for their own finances. Local chapters shall follow policies agreed to by the organization at the annual convention.

ARTICLE EIGHT: INDIVIDUAL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

All individual members of TDU must pay dues and work to build the TDU. All members shall be expected to distribute TDU literature in their area and take part in TDU activities. It shall be required of every member that he or she follow the policies agreed to at the convention.

Any TDU member who is elected to TDU office will be responsible to the body that elected that member.

Individual members who run for union office shall run as candidates of TDU who are dedicated to building rank and file power and supporting the TDU program. Candidates who gain union office as TDU candidates will be held to the TDU program they ran on. They shall be expected to continue to vocally and actively support the same policies and continue to build TDU.

ARTICLE NINE: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

It is recognized that the national convention is the highest body and holds ultimate decision making power in the TDU. As such, it is required of the national convention that a policy and program for the coming year be decided upon for the guidance of the National Steering Committee and members and chapters.

All votes taken within this organization shall be decided by simple majority (50% plus 1).

ARTICLE TEN: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

All Teamsters and Teamster spouses are eligible to become members of TDU. All individual members have equal rights to vote, run for office, etc. Each member must pay dues and assume membership as an individual. Any TDU member has the right to attend the national convention. All TDU members who are in attendance have the right to full voting and discussion rights on all matters before the convention. While individual members have full rights to attend and speak in an orderly manner in meetings of the NSC, only duly elected members of the NSC (and also elected alternates filling permanent vacancies) shall have the right to vote on matter before it.

ARTICLE ELEVEN: EXPULSION

No member may be expelled from TDU unless there is clear, documented proof that such member has used the resources of TDU for personal financial gain.

ARTICLE ELEVEN: FINANCES

Every member of TDU shall be required to pay a minimum yearly membership dues to the national office of no less than $10.00. All members shall receive a subscription to CONVOY. Recognizing that such a fee would not begin to meet our real expenses, the NSC is empowered to also enact a **voluntary** financial pledge system for those members who have

expressed their ability to pay more than the minimum. All financial committments above the $10.00 minimum shall be voluntary. A financial report shall be given at all NSC meetings and at conventions.

ARTICLE THIRTEEN: POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

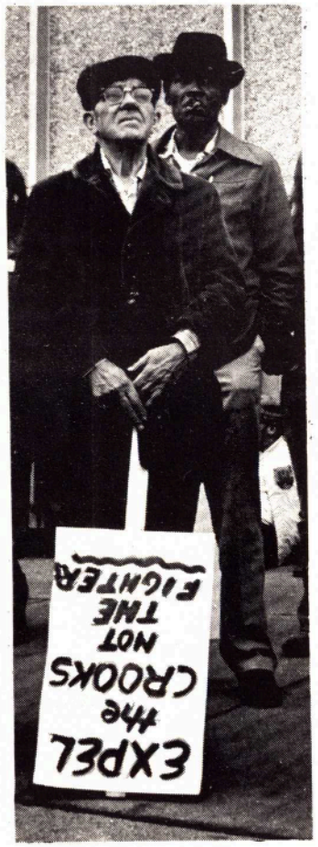
TDU shall remain independent of any particular political organization. Further, no member may use the resources of this organization for his or her own political advancement. This clause is in no way intended to restrict individuals from following their own particular political ideology, but is written merely to protect TDU from being characterized as supporting one particular party or organization.

Individual members shall **at all times** retain their individual right to speak out publically **as an individual** in support of their own political beliefs.

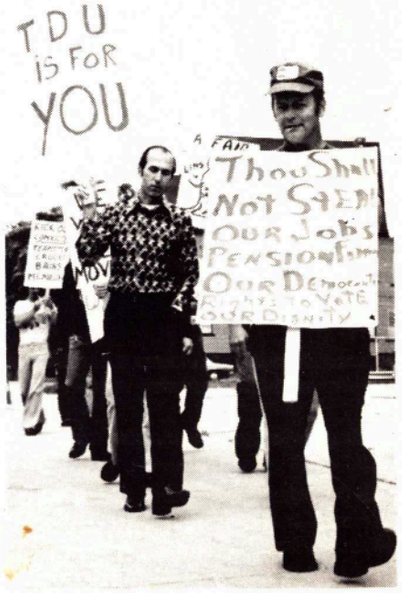
ARTICLE FOURTEEN: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution shall be amended only at TDU Conventions. Amendments shall be submitted one month in advance and mailed to local chapters for consideration as soon as possible in advance of the start of the convention. They can be mailed by any member to the National Secretary. They shall be made available to the Convention, and shall be voted on. Those passed by a majority (50% plus 1) shall become effective immediately and incorporated into this constitution.

TDU members keep the constitution in line with the needs of the rank and file by passing amendments at the convention. The convention is the highest body of the TDU, where every member attending has the right to vote on all issues facing the body as a whole.

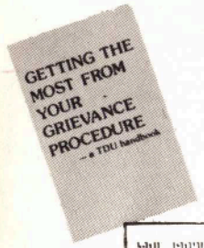


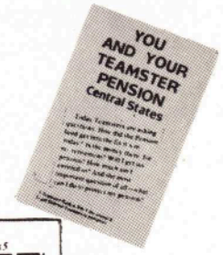
ABOVE: Detroit Teamsters out on a wildcat in April 1976. Teamsters for a Decent Contract organized for the strike and that won what little we got in 1976.

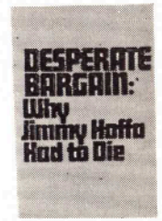


LEFT & RIGHT: These men were among the many who turned out to support Camarata and Ferdnance when Local 299 tried to expel them.

TDU Literature







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